

**TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 27, 2015
PLEASE RESTORE FUNDING TO CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**

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Please do not cut the funding to the Centers for Independent Living in CT. I have been the Administrative Assistant for the CT State Independent Living Council, Inc. since 2004. I have witnessed first-hand at how busy the Centers are and how much they help the people in CT who have the greatest needs. A major factor that separates centers from other organizations is that a majority of their staff, management and board of directors are themselves, persons with disabilities. Independent Living does not mean that people with disabilities do not rely on other people: It is a realization that in any community, people with and without disabilities rely on each other. The real issue becomes the control over one's life, one's services and how they are delivered.

Centers provide advocacy, information and referral, peer counseling and independent living skills training. They are the ONLY Cross disability organization in CT that serves any age group. Centers promote empowerment and self-reliance for persons with disabilities, regardless of the nature or type of disability. They are a single point of access for services and activities that make self-sufficiency a reality. Centers are consumer controlled and community based staffed primarily by people with disabilities.

Centers are cost effective – low administrative cost and the absence of bureaucracy gives the taxpayers of CT the return on their dollar.

Please restore the funding to the Centers, without this funding they will be forced to make staff cuts and possibly close a center, they each hold an important role in their respective communities.